This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

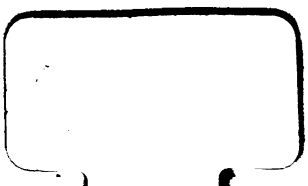
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



(HERBERT Hall)

NBI

not in N.Y.S. 4 Dec. 1918

MOONRISE

A Book of Poems

BY

HERBERT J. HALL

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1918

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
827046
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1918 L

Copyright, 1918, by
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

THE PLIMPTON PRESS
NORWOOD, MASS. U.S.A.

A number of these poems have previously appeared in *The Bellman* and in *Collier's Weekly*.

* New Republic - 30 Nov 1918

CONTENTS

I

	PAGE
Riding Lights	1
To One Aboard a Stricken Ship	3
Yet Was the Night Awake	4
Silver Sea	5
The Sail Loft	6
Sea Mist	7
Flight	8
Gulls	11
Dreams	12
Moon Path	13
Cape Cod	14
Noon	17
Here Is Thy Heaven	18
Moonlight	19
Sea and Sky Are One	20
The Plains of Nauset	21
Race Point	22
The Tree-Tops	24
The Last of the Storm	25
Night	26

II

Moonrise	28
The Master	30
Cymbals	31

PAGE

My Flutist 32
Piccolo 33
Tympani 34
Words From Grieg's Berceuse 36
On Hearing Debussy's Clair de Lune 38
The Secret of the Strings 39
Triumph 41

III

Strength 43
Compensation 45
The Slender Moon 46
Paths 47
The Call 49
Bald Pate Hill 50
The Prisoner 51
Death 54
Summer Night 55
The Garden World 56
Rhapsody 57
The Draw Tender 58
The Narrow Street 60
Drum Taps 61
For Those Who Fall 63

RIDING LIGHTS

After the long, long voyage
Rest in the land-locked bay,
Night and pale stars without number
After the glare of day.

Yellow shore lights faintly glowing,
White city lights up beyond,
Riding lights sleepily rocking
Here in the big black pond.

Long lazy swells from the ocean
Silently lift and let fall
Later in foam to awaken
White by the low city wall.

Dreaming of storms and of danger,
Dreaming of life on the deep,
Shadow ships lying at anchor
Drowsily stir in their sleep.

RIDING LIGHTS

Softly the wind in the rigging
Hums at an old, old tune,
Lightly rap-rapping, the halyards
Follow the rhyme and the rune.

Yellow shore lights faintly glowing,
White city lights up beyond,
Riding lights sleepily rocking
Here in the big black pond.

TO ONE ABOARD A STRICKEN SHIP

I KNEW his name would be among the lost
In that great honor roll of men who gave
All that they had and counted not the cost—
The men who knew full well they could not save
The best of life did they but keep awhile
The body and let honor swiftly go
Down to its doom.

Almost I see him smile
In that brave way he had, so still and slow,—
I do believe he smiled in all the din
And shouting and the hiss of quenching strife.
It would be wholly like him so to win
Unmoved, the final glory of his life.
Ah! splendid faith to walk upright and free
Through gates of death, serene and undismayed.
Death and the grave gave him their victory
Who chose to meet their coming unafraid.

YET WAS THE NIGHT AWAKE

A RED, misshapen mass,
Like cooling metal from a giant forge,
The moon rose from the sea.
No path across the restless waters lay,
No glowing moon path
Crossed and shot with flying silver—
Hardly yet a glimmer on the ripples' crest,
Yet was the night awake—
Expectant of the glory soon to be.

SILVER SEA

The sea is like dull silver in the light
That sifts down through the pearl grey morning skies—
Dull silver save where long and keen and white
The polished metal of cold sunlight lies.

THE SAIL LOFT

A GREAT dim room, long, low and wide,
Empty, echoing, grey with dust,
Equal home of moth and rust
And home of an untold world beside.
Old home of the sails of bygone days,
The sails that filled from a thousand spars
Beneath the suns and the golden stars
Of far, far distant waterways.

SEA MIST

Out of the sea came a thin white mist,
The meadows drank it up,
Tall trees stooped low to bathe in it,
The world was like a cup
That slowly filled and overflowed,
And in the cool, still air
A rain so fine it could not fall
Hung lightly everywhere.

THE SEA-PLANE

Power, speed and power
And the rush of a furrowing sea,
Green sea that bursts to flower
For the joy of the newly free.

Roar of the engines churning,
Sweep of sustaining wings;
Wings that with mighty spurning
Lift above earthly things.

Into the arms of danger,
Sped by the taunt of a dare,
Leaps my aerial ranger
Up the long spirals of air.

Up where the sky walls are thinning
Higher and higher I creep,

FLIGHT

Silence of heaven beginning
Like the beginning of sleep.

Up to the bounds of all flying
Helpless at last and grown still,
Through with the lust of defying,
Knowing the infinite will.

Out of the cold sky falling
Swings the long earthward glide,
Back to the sea's faint calling,
Sinking in circles wide.

Peace from an endless striving,
Joy of a perfect control,
Wonder of human contriving,
Fullest accord of the whole.

Turnbuckle, brace and spar frame,
Firm and staunch and true,

FLIGHT

Pride of the anvil and forge flame,
Circling down from the blue.

Softly the sea gives alighting,
Friendly and quiet it lies
Waiting the slant plane's righting
Out of the yielding skies.

GULLS

THEY stand upright and still, like sculpted birds—
Live outgrowths of the ocean smitten rock.
The sea wind stirs them not, updashing spray
Rains on the hard grey plumage of the flock.
Their little beady eyes are all alert—
Peering into the sun, into the sea,
And suddenly on wide unerring wings
They rise and soar away like spirits free.

DREAMS

One glimpse of the still white moon the spell
shall be
To waken all the spirit life in me.
And what if I be bathed in that soft light
Through all the hours that make a summer's night?
Shall I not be a dreamer then of dreams,
Here in the moonlight where the hillside seems
A world, and where the boundless sea all told
Is compassed in a shimmering path of gold,
Here where the pine trees touch the bending sky
While depths unmeasured in their shadows lie?
O dear illusions, you are truer then
Than all the knowledge of the world of men.
When the pale dawn appears still may I be
A dreamer by the ever widening sea.

MOON PATH

Steel scales—an armor bright—
Shaken asunder
Showing the depths of night
Everywhere under.
Frail links that do not hold,
Moonlight that scatters
Thin disks of flying gold,
Brightness that shatters
Sea stars that whirling throw-
New stars to glimmer,
Strange lights that leap and glow,
Sparkle and shimmer.

And close inshore
Where the rocks surround their little seas,
Where the movement of water is slow and
circling,
There stirs a golden broth,
A cauldron of cold fire.

CAPE COD

BENEATH a cloudless summer sky
The old Cape lies asleep,
The gentle airs of summer blow,
The slow tides softly ebb and flow
Here by the brooding deep.
The low hills shine with generous sun,
The vales between are gay
With blossoms and with song of birds,
With tiny joys too dear for words,
With heart and soul of May.
O hills and vales and glowing sands
And white sails drifting by,
O cliffs in your majestic sweep,
O shining waves that glide and creep
With long, retreating sigh:—
Dream, Cape, all tenderness is thine,
Girt by thine azure sea,—
The peace and rest which over all
Thy lands and circling waters fall
Come also unto me.

I yield me to the spell you weave,
And yet I know—I know:—
No need to hide thy jagged scars,
No need to mask thy shoals and bars,
Thy deadly undertow.
How well this summer dress becomes
Thy massive limbs, O Cape.
How well the flowery girdles hold,
How well the flowing grasses fold
Thy tawny giant shape!
Sleep well, old Cape, thy quiet sleep,
But not for long the flowers,
Oh, not for long the blue sea's plane,
Oh, not for long the warm, sweet rain,
The gentle summer showers.
I hear the thunder of the surf,
The shrieking of the gale,
The hiss of boiling yellow foam,
The cry of a man who will ne'er see home
And the sound of a rending sail.

CAPE COD

I see thee rise in thy might, O Cape,
Thy splendid, easy strength—
The sheer cliffs lift their walls of sand,
They make their long, titanic stand
Throughout thy storm-torn length.
God knows the weight of the winds that sweep
Across thy patient moors,
The sting of the flying sand and sleet,
The angry clutch of the waves that beat
Against thine ice-bound shores.
Enough, 'tis past,—and now once more
The old Cape lies asleep.
Again the airs of summer blow,
The slow tides softly ebb and flow
Here by the brooding deep.
Dream, Cape—all tenderness is thine—
Girt by thine azure sea.
The peace and rest which over all
Thy lands and circling waters fall
Come also unto me.

NOON

THEIR white sails blending into one,
The coastwise schooners ply,
Dim in the blur of noonday sun
Between the sea and sky.
So still the sails, so still the sea,
Far in the dreaming day,
The ships seem anchored peacefully
There in the wide sea way.

HERE IS THY HEAVEN

O FAR, pale, shimmering, brooding, patient sea,
Now hast thou shown to me the peace that lies
Within thy mighty heart continually:
That peace for which the world so vainly cries.
When all the heavens above thee flash and burn
With golden fires to greet the rising day,
It lies not in thy mirrored depths to yearn
For brighter skies beyond thy ken away.
Here is thy heaven, and all thy soul is bright;
Here is thy sun and all its ways are gold,
Until the stars flare dimly, and the night
Shall with its peace thy sleeping waves enfold.

MOONLIGHT

HIGH moon and cloudless, giving half the sea
Full glory of your light,
Your light direct and sparkling
Like a flood of living silver in the night—
Give then with lesser glow
And mixed with darkness
Something of yourself to all the sea—
Some dusk of heaven
To all the distant borderings of night.
Even among the rocks along the shore,
Those inky blots that seem not rocks
But silhouetted monsters crouching low—
Even among these shadows
Bear at last your light.

SEA AND SKY ARE ONE

An easy afternoon,
Still, serene.
The water and the sky are one—
A misty blue.
No far horizons give the sea its bound.
No clouds above,
No rippling lines beneath.
All blue—smooth, quiet blue.
And in the midst,
As though she sailed the sky,
A small boat with her sails adroop
Hangs motionless.

THE PLAINS OF NAUSET

MILES of low pine trees covering deep the sand
With russet needles. The high sun, still and hot,
Fills sleepy hollows that on every hand
Give out sweet odors from the earth begot.
Forget the sea beyond that neighboring dune,
And soon upon a little rising ground,
Here in the land-encircled noon
Where stunted pine trees mark the farthest bound,
There shall appear a vision magical.
Above the tree-tops silently shall glide
Tall yellow masts and spars, slant stack and all
The clean white upper works—a tall ship's pride.
After the ship has passed, her deep, sea call,
Vibrant and sad, among the pines will fall.

RACE POINT

End of the cape—
On every side
The level sea
Spreads out its steel gray distances,
Infinite plains,
Hard, unchanging.
Only the great sad dunes
Cold, sea bitten,
Rise and fall like steep ensculpted waves
Flecked with green,
Topped with white,
Silent and lonely.
Off shore and colored like the sea,
A schooner, sails aslant,
Makes south for George's Banks.
A low tramp steamer
Churns along at the same speed
And with the same lean look she had
Two months ago, leaving Manila Bay.

RACE POINT

Race Point is quiet,
Scarce a breath
Stirs the gray waters that tomorrow will be roaring
in,
White with the awful fury of the storm.

THE TREE-TOPS

TO E. C. B.

THERE is a place, a wondrous place, I think
It would be called, if common words could tell
In anywise the charm that here doth link
The sea, the sky, the land in happy spell.
There is a little house for looking out,
For gazing far beyond the ocean's rim;
A house with tree-tops closely hedged about,
And all the world besides grows very dim,
When down among the rocks the foam flowers fade
And fairies hang their lamps among the trees,
The while they dance within the tiny glade,
Their elfin laughter drifting on the breeze.
Then Peter Pan flies swiftly home once more,
And Wendy, whom all goodly people know,
Is with him there above the fading shore
That glimmers faintly, far, far down below.

THE LAST OF THE STORM

In the dim east where weed-brown rocks lie bare,
The weary sea uplifts a cloud of spray—
The last white banner of the vanquished storm.
A long, low wave sweeps onward to the shore.
It floods the worn vault of a rocky cave
With sharp compression like a great door shut,
Then slides back seaward, spent and spiritless.
That is the end. Thin foam will wash and fret
Along the blackened ledges, but the tide
Runs low, the sea has lost its boisterous power.
Around the point the coastwise shipping spreads
Great wrinkled sails to catch the drying sun.

NIGHT

From all the utmost borders of the sea
The dim night slowly rises and draws nigh,
A looming mist that softly, silently,
Steals down the avenues of sea and sky.
Until the last faint outlines that I know
Are faded and I stand at last alone
Beside a sea that owns nor ebb nor flow;
Beside a shadowy world before me grown
So small that I might hold it in my hand.
O little world, I fain would keep you small
And silent save for waves that make the strand
More quiet by their sudden, liquid fall.
Ah, quiet for a little time between
The days, the burning days of toil and might—
A time of simple faith in things unseen,
Of peaceful shadows and of brooding night.

II

MOONRISE

Written after hearing Symphony music.

SLOWLY the first low vibrant notes are born
Out of the stillness of the sombre night—
A dream of music fainter than grey dawn,
A sense of color lovelier than light.
No sound there is, and yet the long notes flow
In deepening sequence o'er the darkened sea.
No breathing stirs while phantom trumpets blow,
The heralds of the night's great symphony.
It comes at last; O God of singing stars,
Help us this wondrous thing to understand.
Is it great music or the moon's gold bars
That thus in floods of heavenly light expand?
Now rising full upon the ocean's marge
The lambent miracle at last appears;
The measure of a theme sincere and large
Breaks forth in ecstasy among the spheres.
The moon, the moon, how shall our hearts contain

MOONRISE

So much of beauty! Now from far away
In gusts of rippling music like bright rain
Rush the swift multitudes of notes at play.
The moonlight's trembling, fine, tumultuous blur,
The pulsing patter of a thousand strings,
Lulls quickly to the softest, faintest stir,
The brushing softness of a night bird's wings.
And through the murmuring maze a slow refrain
Weaves in and out and more insistent grows—
The rising cadences of loss and pain,
The old, old heartbreak that the moonlight knows
So well, yet makes half joy for those who mourn,
Half joy for those whose yearning eyes can see
Beyond our common vision's narrow bourne.
O moonlight, where the broken waters gleam,
Rare moonlight where the still black water lies,
Play on serenely till the full-toned theme
Grows fainter, fainter, fainter still and dies,
And leaves all dark and quiet save
The breathing of the sea as shoreward sweep
The silver flashings of a lengthening wave.
So falls the end, the peaceful end, and sleep.

THE MASTER

It is not music's self that I have heard
But that deep spirit thing that lies beyond
All sound. So lives in look or touch or word
The soul of love. Who shall unbond
For us that hidden soul and set it free—
He is the master,—men shall call him king!
Although the sudden revelation be
Perfected only in its vanishing.

CYMBALS

They trust me with the cymbals,
They do well.
I count the time,
I bide the time.
I hear the strings,
The wood-wind and the brass, their call.
Their calling rises like a wave—
I strike!
Above the rolling drums—I strike!
Like shields of warriors clashing in the sun.
I strike, I strike!
I tip the great crescendo with a flash of fire.

MY FLUTIST

My flutist must be hollow cheeked,
His cheek-bones must be high,
His nose a trifle long and peaked,
And keen as light his eye.

His eyes half close, as thinning lips
The shining tube caress,
The while his slender finger tips
On silver key stops press.

And in my flutist's veins must live,
Not blood, that's far too slow,—
Quick-silver—nothing else will give
The proper speed and flow.

PICCOLO

Above them all
The piccolo—
Shrill as a gale,
Cold as snow,
Sharp as a knife,
Like a creature mad,
With flying hair,
Screaming at night,
In fierce delight,
While trumpets blare
And viols sad
In mellow strife
Sing high and low—
The piercing wail
Of the piccolo
Above them all.

TYMPANI

THE great drums of the orchestra,
They roar and rattle through—
Taut sheepskins stretched on tubs of brass
And tuned to answer true.
The drums, the drums, the cannonading drums.

The drummer rests, the drums are still,
The strings must have their way—
The wood-wind taking up the theme
Has out its reedy say.
The drums, the drums, the silent, waiting drums.

Lightly, lightly through the mist,
The blowing mist of sound,
The drum taps mark, they mark the time
In swift recurring round.
The drums, the drums, the softly beating drums.

A crash! the great drums open up
Like thunder from the skies;

TYMPANI

A lull—in distant thunder peals
The fierce bombardment dies.
The drums, the drums, the distant, distant drums.

WORDS FOR GRIEG'S BERCEUSE

Dream on, dream on,
Here in your cradle reposing—
Dream on, dream on,
Softly your weary eyes closing.
Dream on, dream on,
Here in your cradle reposing—
Dream on, dream on, dream on—dear.

Far on the hill, far on the hill
The grey wolf, the grey wolf approaching I hear,
But he shall not harm you.
Over the hill, over the hill,
The grey wolf, the grey wolf comes near and more
near,
His bright eyes shall charm you—dear.

Dream on, dream on,
Here in your cradle reposing—
Dream on, dream on,
Softly your weary eyes closing—

WORDS FOR GREIG'S BERCEUSE

Dream on, dream on,
Here in your cradle reposing—
Dream on, dream on, dream on—dear.

ON HEARING DEBUSSY'S CLAIR DE LUNE

And I am lying here in moonlight,
I must be still, impersonal.
My heart and soul are merged in moonlight.
I must be moonlight, neither more nor less.
Every thought and feeling shall be still, serene,
Like calm reflections of the moon.

Then, being moonlight, I shall know
The secrets of the stars.
And no one shall deny me deep shadows,
And no one shall deny me love,
For love is made of shadows and of light.

THE SECRET OF THE STRINGS

O GLIDING bows that move in full accord,
O vibrant strings with all your sweet acclaim,
What are you telling me in that brave tongue,
What are your voices calling out to me
Across the wide confusion of the world?

How can the perfect measure of your time
Flow safely through the living maze of sound,
How shall each note that builds the glowing theme
Swing back to answer all that sang before?
How shall the first far-heard, appealing cry
Find answer in the triumph of the last?

Obedience to law, eternal law,
This is your secret, O revealing strings,
This you have called to me across the world—
The world that gropes and struggles for the light—
The world that will not yet obey the law,

The simple law that runs through all our fears,
Through all our sorrow and our happiness—
The law that gives us freedom, that makes plain
The order and the sequences of life.

TRIUMPH

How can I play when half my life lies dead?
How can I ever touch the keys again
And rise upon the wings of joy while pain—
While pain, deep pain of loss, and haunting dread
Of all the lonely future bows my head?
Yet will I play and in this dreary plain
Of sorrow, love—dear broken love—shall reign,
So shall I live and so be comforted.
And those who listen shall in some way know
In all my playing, clear yet ill defined,
My triumph and my sadness. They shall hear
The sorrow of my life—persistent, slow,
Surging still upward, never yet resigned—
Glad music dimmed by many a hidden tear.

III

STRENGTH

I PUT my shoulder to the edge of grief,
To lift and try if I might bear the load
And go a little further on my way.
I lifted then with all my human strength—
And bear the load I did, with bitterness,
But not for long.
The heart within me failed.
I lacked the courage of a little child,
The child who soon forgets to be afraid
And goes on cheerfully to meet his fate.
A green bank beckoned me and down I lay,
Too spent to struggle and too proud to pray,
Full of such misery as those must know
Who have no hope and yet must hope or die.
I noticed listlessly the summer sky,
I felt the air that crosses from the sea.
The lengthened shadow of an old tree lay
Upon the marshland, and there came the sound

Of birds within the tangled thicket's depth.
What were these things so ravishingly sweet?
Why were they living all about me there?
"Here are old trees," I said, "I know them well,
And there are birds that have no grief to bear."
And slowly as I lay with half-closed eyes
My brain with all its strife of reasoning
Gave up the task of understanding life.
I ceased to think and so began to dream.
A soul within me stirred—I seemed to know
That all the pageant of the summer day
Was but the revelation and the sign
Of God.

Nay, question not the thing I knew.
I saw not God, but trees and grass and sky,
And felt my kinship with these gentle things.
Since trees and grass are God expressed for man,
How close I lay there to the mighty heart
Of Him.

I tried once more the weight of grief
And found I held it lightly in my hand,
With something of the strength of sky and trees.

COMPENSATION

Some day, because your eyes are quick with tears,
Because there is no hardness in your heart—
You shall have wisdom great as life can give,
You shall have happiness as deep as tears.

THE SLENDER MOON

In all the world what is there more to ask,
Or better, than a young moon shining down
Through budding trees when spring is in the air
And when from some far slope where embers glow
A fragrant brushwood smoke comes drifting by?
There are some trifles might be asked besides—
Justice, mercy, peace,—perhaps a few
Such human blessing would be welcome still.
But on my life I do believe it true
That all the virtues would come trooping down
To bless the earth if weary eyes could look
More lovingly upon the slender moon.
The rich would open coffers for the poor;
The poor, the shiftless poor, would gird themselves
To do their share of labor in the world.
The lifted hand of hate, upraised to strike,
Might sheathe a shaken, moon-reflecting blade.
For there is that in moonlight and in spring
Which cannot live with violence and wrong,
But drives them forth from lives that truly love
The air and light,—the gentleness of spring.

PATHS

For I have suffered so
In body and in mind
That sharp new paths of feeling have appeared
Across the pleasant field of life—
Hard beaten paths
That run in wrong directions.
Paths that cross and hesitate,
That wind and turn in ugly and uncertain ways.
They are right enough for a little
But soon diverge from that.
The paths are worn by many trespassing feet,
But most, alas, by my own aimless wanderings.
Yet am I not quite done with the field of life,
Not quite ready to leave it.
I survey it ruefully
But with a half smile,
For I surmise that after all there is reason
And perhaps good in all the crossings and recross-
ings:—
A design, hard and intricate perhaps,
But decipherable.

PATHS

If I can but make it out and lead the paths,
All of them, into one straight way—
Then shall I not regret divergences.
I shall at last be sure of myself.
I shall not be troubled with further wanderings,
And all the rest of life will lie quite straight and
plain.

THE CALL

Out of the sunset, out of the night,
Out of the sky and sea—
Through the white veil of the still moonlight
Silently, constantly,
Cometh a call that none may know
Save those who listen long
To the sound of waters that ebb and flow,
To the dim world's evensong—
Save those who listen with hearts that burn
For a sound above all sound,
Save those who listen with souls that yearn
For the lost that must be found.
Follow and follow though shadows loom,
Follow the silent call,
Through worlds of light and worlds of gloom—
Give to the quest your all,
For the call is the voice of the ages past
To the ages yet unborn—
The call of the first to the best and last,
The song of the coming dawn.

BALD PATE HILL

LIGHTS sparkle all along the distant shore
And on the rising slopes of unseen hills.
They fill mysterious hollows with their keen,
Undying sparks and make the whole night shine—
Yet shed for us who watch no earthly light.
These lesser constellations are so far,
So small, their color shows no circling shade,
Their brightness falls upon no leaf.
The streets
Of distant cities where their white beams make
The day return, may clang and roar and babble
With the life of men.
But here is night
And silence and the cool, sweet breath of wind
That dies and lives again a moment brief
Among the birch trees glimmering in the dark.

THE PRISONER

THEY have me close as bars of steel can hold.
See, I may take two steps and this way four,
Across the granite of my prison floor,—
So closely these protecting walls enfold.
Protecting! Yes, protecting men from me
When I am gentle as a little child—
Restraining me whom they have lately styled
A murderer.

More likely would I be
A preacher, knowing how the strong tide sets
Toward the tossing, whirling sea of lust:—
Defeated, knowing well the taste of dust:—
So might I teach the children sin begets.
And I would tell them first how vain it is
To struggle with a passion fully grown,
Lest they should know the anguish I have known,
Lest they should feel the long, betraying kiss
That sin bestows to name the fighting done,—
When honor's feeble guard is down at last,
When all the fateful skirmishing is past

And hell's own carnival is well begun.
Ah, failure, that is worse than all the rest,
And I would not have failed if I had stood
Far over on the side they call the good.
Then might I easily have won the test.

I shall not waver when they make the end,
The end I well deserve, of life and light.
I shall not fail this time when sudden night
O'ertakes me, when that one-time friend
That gives us light and power to banish space
Turns on me as I turned on men, in hate—
And when the flash, the cruel flash of fate
Leaps from the dark to still my twitching face.

What is this earth that I am leaving then,
Is it so good that I should seem so wrong?
Who is this God that I must see ere long,
I who have failed so badly among men?
I have no fear of death and yet it seems

THE PRISONER

A thing tremendous, taken out of hand:—
Oh, it is hard, so hard to understand.
All life seems distant now and made of dreams,—
I hear the clock strike in the prison tower,
The rumble of a wagon in the street.
The close, unstirring air seems strangely sweet
With last impressions of this final hour.
How soon shall I be stricken blind and dumb
To know no more of this strange life—O God,
How soon the stroke of thine uplifted rod.
Ah, Christ of God, I hear their steps,—they come.

DEATH

The truth flashed in upon me
After his troubled breathing ceased,
After the head dropped back
And lay immovable.
Whatever may have been the man's mistakes,
His failures or his sins—
Here in this great presence
He was like all other men—
No better and no worse.
The pallor of the world lay on his brow,
The sorrow of the world
Had dulled his eyes.
The dignity of death had come to him
At last.

SUMMER NIGHT

Must I shut out the moonlight, must I sleep
While sea and marshland revel in the light?
Must I be sightless while upon the deep
The moon-path trembles, while the lovely night
Grows more and yet more radiantly clear?
The air is full of sound—the slender shrill
Of tree-toads from the sedges far and near
Is ceaseless and the wind is never still.
In the night air the shadowy tree-tops seem
Like sable plumes that wave serene and high.
O night, so beautiful, O splendid dream—
In these dim eyes your glories fade and die.
Though deep my sleep, still shall my spirit know
The magic of the moon's perpetual glow.

THE GARDEN WORLD

O, the world it is a garden wide and deep,
And tonight the garden world is wrapt in sleep;
You alone, dear heart, you only do not sleep.

Dim the quiet garden lies in sweet repose,
Closed the petals of the languor-loving rose;
You alone, dear heart, you only do not sleep.

So I come across the grass with noiseless feet
Till I find you where the starlit pathways meet,
So I come to bring you peace and give you sleep.

I have touched your forehead with a shadow cool,
I have drawn the shadows round the dreaming pool,
So shall you sleep, dear heart, so shall you sleep.

While the young moon lingers in the western sky
And the pale stars glimmer faint and far and high,
So shall you sleep, in perfect stillness sleep.

RHAPSODY

SLOWLY out of a mist of sleep,
Real world or seeming,
I see the heavy white world creep,
Dreaming, still dreaming.

Banked with a mist-cloud white as snow,
Dreaming, still dreaming,
Dear pale world that I used to know,
Real world or seeming.

O, what is real and what is dream?
Dreaming, still dreaming,
What shall be and what shall seem,
Real world or seeming?

THE DRAW TENDER

Two things I do,
I let the river craft go safely through
Then lock the bridge back in a pathway true,
These things I do.

I let them by,
Their whistles shrieking to the peaceful sky,
The trains that make old timbers creak and cry—
I let them by.

These things I know—
The look of shipping as it passes slow,
The tugs and schooners as they come and go,
These things I know.

I know the tide,
I see its changing currents wash and glide
All day along the weedy old pier side,
I know the tide.

THE DRAW TENDER

I am content—
For such plain work my life was surely meant;
Let others follow each his chosen bent,
I am content.

827046

THE NARROW STREET

A NARROW street runs winding through the town,
So well I know each way its turnings take,
And all the bordering houses low and brown;
I know the little garden plots that break
The dullness with a wave of red and gold,
I know the people who day after day
Make thoroughfare along the pathway old.
And somewhat more I know of that brown way—
The happy end of all its wanderings,
The end, where stranger ships at anchor lie,
Where rise and dip the wheeling sea birds' wings
In all the freedom of the sea and sky.

We need you now, Walt Whitman, with your "beat
of the terrible drums"—
To celebrate again the departure of troops with
their banners that flap in the breeze.
No one else can see them quite as you did, or see-
ing, make them so real and vital.
We need you to tell of our soldiers, of our tall sons
marching to war,
Entraining in railroad stations, without cheers, but
with deep feeling,
Waving their hats as the long trains move slowly
down the line,—
Living in camps in the desert on the banks of dry
river courses,
Drinking the alkali water and sleeping at night un-
der the stars.
We need you to speak of the horses and the saddles,
of field guns and new rifles,
And the squat machine guns that spit out fire under
the tropic sun.

We need your great heart searching for truth and
for understanding
While our own hearts ache with dull, baffling doubts
and fears.
You could turn our weakness and our yearning into
strength and patience
With your long, irregular lines like trailing troops
of men.
No more do we want the patter of small, considered
verses
But the pouring rattle of drum beats, the roar of
the rolling drums.
We need you now, Walt Whitman, with your "beat
of the terrible drums."

FOR THOSE WHO FALL

HEADS down, they say, the charging soldiers go.
Long miles away and safely out of sight
The great guns try the range—they have it right.
Doomed are the charging men—yet do they flow
Like a wide river flood, steady and slow—
Up to the low redoubt under the height
Where the hot mitrailleuses roar through the night.
None shall advance and live—that much they know.
Aye, well they know their bitter fate, and we,
This much we know—when at a master stroke
Ten thousand men arise as one, to be
The best that they can be,—the battle smoke
Becomes a shroud of glory for them all,
And victory is sure—for those who fall.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building